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SUBJECT: PRC/IRAN: VFM LU GUOZENG'S TRIP TO IRAN

Classified By: Charge d'Affairs David Sedney. Reasons
1.4 (b/d).

Summary

11. (C) Vice Foreign Minister Lu Guozeng focused during his February 24-26 visit to Iran on discussing the gravity of the international situation that Iran faces with regard to the nuclear issue, according to MFA Arms Control and Nonproliferation Department Deputy Director General Wang Qun. Lu delivered strong messages to Tehran, warning it to adopt a flexible position and take resolute steps before the March 6 IAEA Board of Governors meeting. Iran contends that increased pressure from the IAEA, the EU-3 and the United States will be counterproductive and Iran is not afraid of sanctions. The Iranians did tell the Chinese for the first time, however, that they view the Russian proposal as "acceptable," although technical details remain to be worked out, Wang said. End Summary.

12. (C) Vice Foreign Minister Lu Guozeng traveled to Tehran February 24-26 to urge the Iranian Government to take positive steps to resolve the nuclear issue, according to MFA Arms Control and Nonproliferation Department Deputy Director General Wang Qun. In a March 3 readout to Polmincouns, Wang said that VFM Lu had long, intense discussions with Iranian President Ahmadinejad, Secretary General of the Iranian Supreme Security Council Ali Larijani and Vice Foreign Minister Safari. VFM Lu delivered four messages to the Iranians, according to Wang. First, the PRC insists that Tehran realize the gravity of the current situation. Second, Iran's unilateral moves since October 2005 have created the current situation and China is not in favor of Iran's actions. Third, Iran should take resolute steps in the right direction before the March 6 IAEA Board of Governors (BOG) Meeting and should fully suspend its uranium enrichment activities. Fourth, the PRC urges Iran to seriously consider the Russian proposal and explicitly state its acceptance of the proposal by March 6.

13. (C) According to Wang, the Iranians responded strongly to Beijing's points, defending their position. They claimed that during the three years that they suspended nuclear activities to negotiate with the EU-3, they received nothing in return and therefore are compelled to restart research and development activities. Iran insists that it must

safeguard its right to future uranium enrichment activities in order to protect its right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Iran is willing to discuss with the EU-3 the temporary suspension of its enrichment program and would consider returning to the moratorium for a two or three year period, but during this period the right to conduct small scale research and development activities must be retained. Finally Iran contends that increased pressure from the IAEA, the EU-3 and the United States is counterproductive and that Iran does not fear sanctions.

14. (C) Wang said that Iran is giving careful consideration to the Russian proposal, which it described for the first time as "acceptable," adding that technical details remains to be worked out. Iran's positive attitude toward the Russian proposal shows that there is some flexibility in Tehran's position, Wang claimed.

15. (C) VFM Lu's overall impression is that Tehran is anxious about its situation, although it remains unwilling to give up its nuclear research and development activities, according to Wang. He said that Iran is aware that the current situation does not benefit it and Tehran is eager to find a solution. Wang stated that there are political factions in Iran that have shown greater flexibility towards finding a resolution to the impasse and that these "forces should be worked on."

16. (C) Wang concluded his readout by imploring the United States to play a constructive role and not make any moves that would escalate the situation. Despite the gravity of the situation, based on VFM Lu's trip Beijing believes there is still room for a diplomatic solution and that all parties should keep diligently working towards a solution. Polmincouns thanked Wang for the readout and stressed the importance of close cooperation between the United States, China, Russia and the EU-3 to persuade Iran to address international concerns about its nuclear program.
Sedney